Docket: 6740.01

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Daniel T. Johnson		
Appln. No.:	09/883,779		
Filed:	June 18, 2001	Examiner:	F. Poinvil
Title:	Method and System for Managing Enterprise Assets	Group Art Unit:	3628

AFFIDAVIT OF WILLIAM A. ESTREM

Sir:

I, William A. Estrem, hereby state the following:

1. I am Principal of Metaplexity Associates. Metaplexity Associates' address is 321 Pendryn Hill Curve, Woodbury, MN 55125.

2. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Technology Education from Eastern Illinois University (May, 1977), a Masters of Science Degree in Technology Education from the Eastern Illinois University (August, 1981), and a Ph.D. in Education from Illinois State University (May, 1985).

3. I have worked or taught in the field of enterprise information architecture and management and strategic information systems planning for more than 20 years.

4. I have extensive knowledge and background in enterprise information architecture and management and strategic information systems planning, such as covered by the Present Application. In my present work, I teach and consult with organizations on the development of Enterprise Architectures that will enable them to more effectively manage the complex array of processes, applications, data stores, and computing infrastructure that they employ to meet business requirements. I am currently the chairman of The Open Group Architecture Forum. This organization develops and distributes The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF), which is one of the most widely used frameworks for conducting Enterprise Information Architecture. I am also a senior member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, and in the

year 2000 I was the chairman of the society's Computers and Automated Systems Association (CASA). CASA had a membership of over 6,000 members worldwide at that time. As an educator, I have taught graduate level courses in Enterprise Applications, Enterprise Integration, E-Commerce, and Mobile Computing. From 1988 through 1996 I was employed at the headquarters of 3M corporation. I worked as a Senior Software Engineering Instructor in the Research labs and based on my work in that area, I was selected to be a member of the Information Architecture group as a Consulting Specialist. A full curriculum vita can be provided on request.

Documents Reviewed

5. In reaching the opinion expressed in this Affidavit, I reviewed the following documents:

- U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/833,779 to Johnson for SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING ENTERPRISE ASSETS ("Present Application") (more specifically, I reviewed U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2002/0016757 A1 and the independent claims attached in Appendix A);
- the Office Action of January 28, 2005 issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office relating to the Present Application;
- U.S. Patent No. 6,128,602 to Northington, *et al.* for OPEN-ARCHITECTURE SYSTEM FOR REAL-TIME CONSOLIDATION OF INFORMATION FROM MULTIPLE FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ("Northington");
- an article entitled "Asset Management, Maintenance Redefined," written by Karen Abramic Dilger (Manufacturing Systems, vol. 15, no. 7, pp. 122-128, July 1997) ("Dilger"); and
- U.S. Patent No. 5,918,207 to McGovern et al. for PROCESS AND SYSTEM FOR PREDICTIVE RESOURCE PLANNING ("McGovern").

Northington Fails to Teach or Suggest "Assets" As Claimed in the Present Invention

6. It is my opinion that Northington does not disclose, teach, or suggest the subject matter recited in the independent claims in Appendix A.

7. The Present Application teaches a method and system for managing enterprise assets. As set forth in the Application, the "assets" of the independent claims in Appendix A are physical items or equipment that can be maintained or serviced, such as refrigerators, air conditioners, computer systems, and the like. For example, in one embodiment of the invention in the present application, it is noted that

> a service provider user has access to all assets of a type that he services and all work orders that he is responsible for fulfilling. These assets may include assets located at various distributed sites and may even include assets owned by distinct enterprises. An equipment manufacturer may have access to the assets at the various distributed sites that it manufactured.

See Present Application, p. 10, ll. 7-11. Thus, the "assets" of the present invention are physical items or equipment.

8. Northington does not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention of claim 1. Claim 1 is directed to a system for managing a plurality of assets of a plurality of distributed enterprises, including, in part, "a database for storing asset information for the plurality of assets of the plurality of enterprises," and a central processor that "tracks information relevant to managing each of the plurality of assets."

In contrast, Northington discloses an open architecture system that consolidates information from a plurality of financial systems into a single accounting system. See Northington, Abstract. The system provides for "monitoring, management, and reporting of *financial accounts and transactions performed by the financial systems*." Id. at col. 2, ll. 49-51 (emphasis added). Thus, Northington teaches management of financial accounts and transactions. Northington does not teach or suggest a database for storing asset information for a plurality of assets of a plurality of enterprises or a central processor that tracks information relevant to managing each of the plurality of assets. Northington, therefore, fails to teach or

suggest the invention of claim 1. Further, both Dilger and McGovern, discussed below, fail to remedy the deficiencies of Northington as to claim 1.

9. Northington does not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention of claim 20. Claim 20 is directed to a system for managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise, including, in part, a website hosted by at least one computer wherein the computer "tracks information relevant to determining a total cost of ownership for each asset."

In contrast, as discussed above, Northington discloses a system that consolidates information from a plurality of financial systems into a single accounting system. The system provides for monitoring, management, and reporting of financial accounts and transactions performed by the financial systems. Northington does not teach or suggest a website hosted by at least one computer wherein the computer tracks information relevant to determining a total cost of ownership for each asset. Northington, therefore, fails to teach or suggest the invention of claim 20. Further, both Dilger and McGovern, discussed below, fail to remedy the deficiencies of Northington as to claim 20.

10. Northington does not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention of claim 30. Claim 30 is directed to a method of managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise including "storing asset information pertaining to a factor for each asset identified in a database" and "receiving user specified requests for asset information from a client processor at a remote site."

In contrast, as discussed above, Northington discloses a system that consolidates information from a plurality of financial systems into a single accounting system. The system provides for monitoring, management, and reporting of financial accounts and transactions performed by the financial systems. Northington does not teach or suggest storing asset information pertaining to a factor for each asset identified in a database and receiving user specified requests for asset information from a client processor at a remote site. Northington, therefore, fails to teach or suggest the invention of claim 30. Further, both Dilger and McGovern, discussed below, fail to remedy the deficiencies of Northington as to claim 30.

Dilger Fails to Teach or Suggest the Inventions of the Present Application

11. It is my opinion that Dilger does not disclose, teach, or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 38 or any other independent claims in Appendix A. More specifically, Dilger fails to describe any system with sufficient clarity and detail to establish that the subject matter existed in any operable form with any elements as claimed in the Present Application. In fact, Dilger fails to disclose, teach, or suggest an operable method or system of any kind. At best, Dilger is an interesting article about companies and their plant maintenance systems that fails to disclose any subject matter of the Present Application in the same way a picture of a computer is interesting but fails to disclose the components of the computer or how the computer operates. Thus, it is my opinion that one of ordinary skill in the art, reading Dilger, would be unable to create a method or system of the present invention as set forth in the claims in Appendix A.

12. Further, it is my opinion that Dilger fails to teach or suggest every limitation of the present invention as claimed in claim 38. Claim 38 is directed to a method of generating service requests in a highly distributed enterprise to a plurality of service providers from a plurality of distributed asset sites, including, in part, a "database containing asset information and service provider information."

In contrast, Dilger provides a non-substantive summary of various systems without providing information about the systems' configuration or operation with sufficient clarity or detail to allow one of ordinary skill in the art to duplicate any of the systems. More specifically, Dilger fails to teach or suggest a database containing asset information and service provider information as claimed in claim 38. Thus, fails to teach or suggest the invention of claim 38. Further, both Northington and McGovern, discussed herein, fail to remedy the deficiencies of Dilger as to claim 38.

McGovern Fails to Teach or Suggest Selecting an Appropriate Service Provider Based on the Asset to Be Serviced

12. It is my opinion that McGovern does not disclose, teach, or suggest the subject matter recited in the independent claims in Appendix A.

13. McGovern does not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention of claim 38 or any other independent claims in Appendix A. Claim 38 is directed to a method of generating service requests in a highly distributed enterprise to a plurality of service providers from a plurality of distributed asset sites, including, in part, "automatically selecting an appropriate service provider based on the asset to be serviced."

In contrast, McGovern discloses a "system for predictive resource planning to allow a service provider to meet a customer's predicted technical resource requirements." See McGovern, Abstract. In the McGovern system, "the service provider matches candidates to customer requirements while concurrently matching candidates to technical profiles." Thus, McGovern teaches that a single service provider matches individuals to customer requirements. McGovern does not disclose selecting a service provider based on the asset to be serviced, and in fact does not disclose assets to be serviced. Thus, McGovern fails to teach or suggest the method of claim 38. Further, both Northington and Dilger, discussed above, fail to remedy the deficiencies of McGovern as to claim 38.

Conclusion

14. In summary, it is my opinion that none of Northington, Dilger, or McGovern, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the subject matter recited in the independent claims in Appendix A.

This completes my statement.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. I understand that willful false statements may be punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both. All statements made herein on my own knowledge are true, and all statements made herein on information and belief are believed to be true.

Executed on this 27th day of June, 2005.

William A. Estrem
Principal
Metaplexity Associates

Appendix A

1. (Original) A system for managing a plurality of assets of a plurality of distributed enterprises and allowing a user to access asset information, the system comprising:

a central processor; and

a database for storing asset information for the plurality of assets of the plurality of enterprises, the database in communication with the central processor;

wherein the central processor tracks information relevant to managing each of the plurality of assets.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor includes a website hosted by at least one computer in communication with a computer network through a communication link.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a client processor in communication with the central processor through the communication link.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the database stores asset information in the form of pages which in turn contain links to other pages.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor automatically generates an E-mail message to a service provider in response to a service request by the user.

6. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the client processor inputs, queries, and downloads asset information from the central processor through a web browser.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for utilizing a user profile, including securable attributes, to limit access to particular asset information.

Appendix A

1. (Original) A system for managing a plurality of assets of a plurality of distributed enterprises and allowing a user to access asset information, the system comprising:

a central processor; and

a database for storing asset information for the plurality of assets of the plurality of enterprises, the database in communication with the central processor;

wherein the central processor tracks information relevant to managing each of the plurality of assets.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor includes a website hosted by at least one computer in communication with a computer network through a communication link.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a client processor in communication with the central processor through the communication link.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the database stores asset information in the form of pages which in turn contain links to other pages.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor automatically generates an E-mail message to a service provider in response to a service request by the user.

6. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the client processor inputs, queries, and downloads asset information from the central processor through a web browser.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for utilizing a user profile, including securable attributes, to limit access to particular asset information.

8. (Original) The user of claim 7, wherein the user profile specifies sites at which the user may access asset information.

9. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for organizing asset information in accordance with the user's request.

10. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for generating a GIS map locating one of the plurality of enterprise assets.

11. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for determining an appropriate service provider for a particular asset and alerting the service provider of a service request.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising an asset interface in communication with the client processor.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for establishing a communication link with the asset interface through the client processor.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the asset interface communicates with the client processor through a wireless communication modality.

15. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code to calculate a total cost of ownership for a particular asset or group of assets.

16. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the database includes at least one database server in communication with a computer network.

17. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the user is an agent of the enterprise.

18. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the user is a service provider.

19. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the user is an equipment manufacturer.

20. (Original) A system for managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise, the system comprising:

a website hosted by at least one computer in communication with a computer network; and

a client processor, including a web browser, in communication with the website through the computer network;

wherein the at least one computer tracks information relevant to determining a total cost of ownership for each asset.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, and further comprising at least one database server in communication with the website, the database server having asset information stored therein in the form of pages, with some pages including links to other pages of information.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, and further comprising a client processor in communication with the central processor and an asset interface in communication with the client processor.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the website is programmed with code for communicating with the asset interface through the client processor.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the asset interface includes a means for taking operative control of a particular asset.

25. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for selectively filtering asset information based on user specified criteria.

26. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for calculating a total cost of ownership.

27. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for utilizing a user profile, including securable attributes, to limit access to particular applications and to particular asset information.

28. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the website includes pictorial displays of each individual asset.

29. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the client processor is a kiosk located at an enterprise site.

30. (Original) A method of managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise, the method comprising:

creating an asset identifier corresponding to each of the plurality of assets for each individual asset;

specifying factors to be monitored for each asset identifier;

storing asset information pertaining to a factor for each asset identifier in a database;

receiving user specified requests for asset information from a client processor at a remote site; and

transmitting the requested asset information to the client processor.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, and further comprising the additional step of providing a web site in communication with a computer network for communicating with a client processor.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of creating a GIS map based on the user specified request.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of filtering asset information based on the user specified request.

34. (Original) The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of calculating a total cost of ownership for an asset or a group of assets based on the user specified request.

35. (Original) The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of inputting asset information from a client processor at a remote site.

36. (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein asset information is stored in the form of pages containing links to other pages.

37. (Original) The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of filtering asset information transmitted to a particular user based on predetermined levels of access.

38. (Original) A method of generating service requests in a highly distributed enterprise to a plurality of service providers from a plurality of distributed asset sites, the method comprising:

providing a website hosted by at least one server computer in communication with a computer network, the website including a database containing asset information and service provider information;

receiving a service request at the website for an asset;

automatically selecting an appropriate service provider based on the asset to be serviced; and

generating an electronic message to the appropriate service provider requesting service.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38, and further comprising the additional steps of creating a log listing service requests, and generating additional electronic messages to the service provider if no response has been forthcoming.

40. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the electronic message is an E-mail.

41. (Original) The method of claim 40, and further comprising the additional step of attaching asset information onto the E-mail.

42. (Original) The method of claim 41, and further comprising the additional step of attaching a link to a web page onto the E-mail.

43. (Original) The method of claim 38, and further comprising the additional step of receiving a service report at the website from a service provider.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43, and further comprising the additional step of storing asset information in the service report under an appropriate factor.

45. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the service request is generated automatically by an asset interface through a client computer in communication with a computer network.